

LAKE SHORE TRAIL



Self-Guiding Booklet
Warriors' Path State Park

Welcome to the Lake Shore Trail! A short hike by the edge of the water will bring you to many special places here at Warriors' Path State Park.

Remember that these shoreline woods are home to many animals, trees and plants. We hikers are just visiting. Just as you'd want a visitor to treat your home with respect, we need to be careful not to damage these natural homes.

So enjoy all the fine nature discoveries here, but be sure to leave nature here for others to enjoy. A leaf or flower that you pick will just fade and die, but the memories you find can last a lifetime.

As in all our Tennessee State Parks, all natural features are protected. Remember to:

Take Only Pictures

Leave Only Footprints

The purpose of this booklet is to add to your enjoyment of the natural variety and human heritage of this lakeshore forest. Each stop is marked by a numbered post.

Please feel free to contact the park naturalist, or other park staff members, if there is any way we can be of help to you.

Text by Marty Silver, Park Naturalist

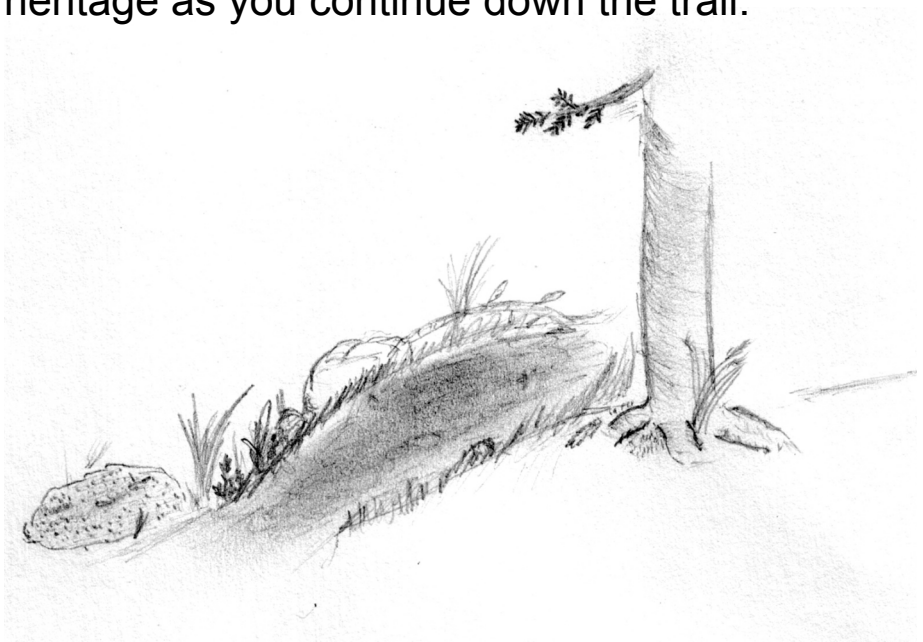
Original pencil sketch illustrations by Chris & Hannah Silver

Stop 1

Before you begin your hike down the trail, pause here at the very start. Stop and feel the land beneath your feet. This land you are about to walk on has seen many changes. It has been ocean bottom, river valley, and lake shore. It has been wilderness, Cherokee hunting ground, farmland, and state park!

Think of all the travels seen by each bit of soil, each pebble, and each living thing. And think of the travels that have brought you to this place.

This landscape and the people of this land have been fellow travelers since the beginnings of time. Together, we will share a bit of that heritage as you continue down the trail.



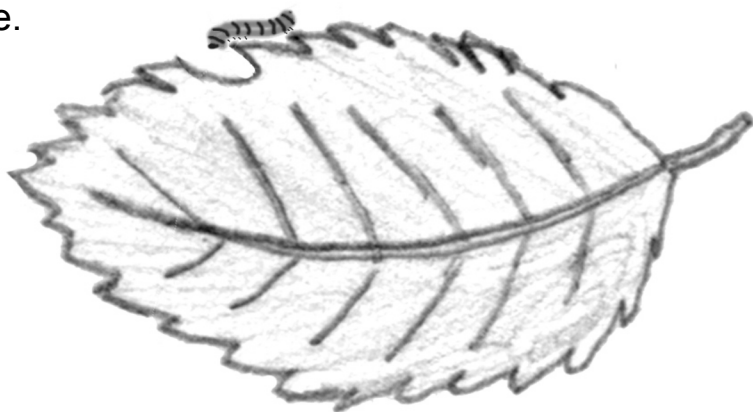
Stop 2

Wait here in silence for just a moment... Our days are so busy, our time so precious, that we often rush through each experience. Sometimes it's good to slow down to nature's pace.

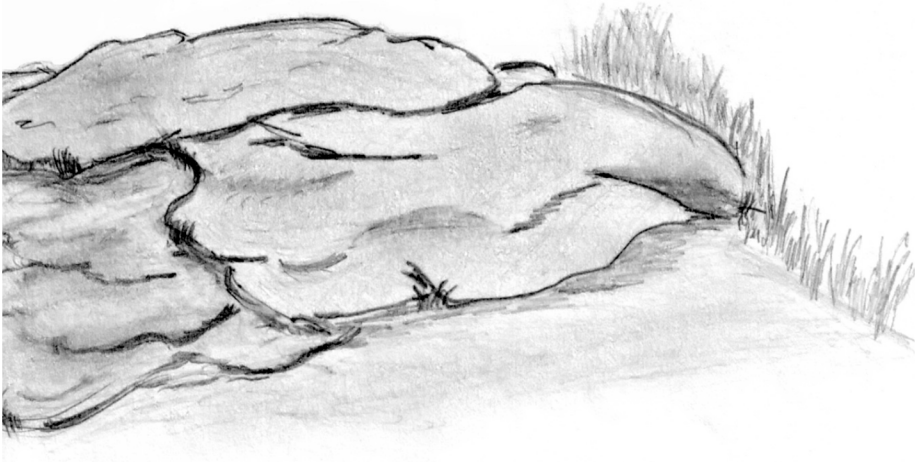
Let your pulse slow to the rhythm of water and woods. Take a deep breath and enjoy the rich, varied smells of the lake and forest. Close your eyes, cup your hands behind your ears and really listen to the small sounds of wind, water and forest life.

Now look again at the woods. There is so much to see! One thing you might notice is that every living thing is food for something else. For example, it's hard to find even one leaf that hasn't been nibbled. If the "nibbler" ate too much, he'd kill his leaf, and then starve. But just a little nibbling lets both survive.

These lakeshore forests have also been "nibbled" by what we people do. You can see the signs of how we have used -- and sometimes abused -- this land. But just like the leaf, we can use carefully and all can survive.



Stop 3



Walk carefully across this limestone ridge. Once the slimy bottom of an ancient ocean, these ancient rocks are slowly wearing away to become part of the forest.

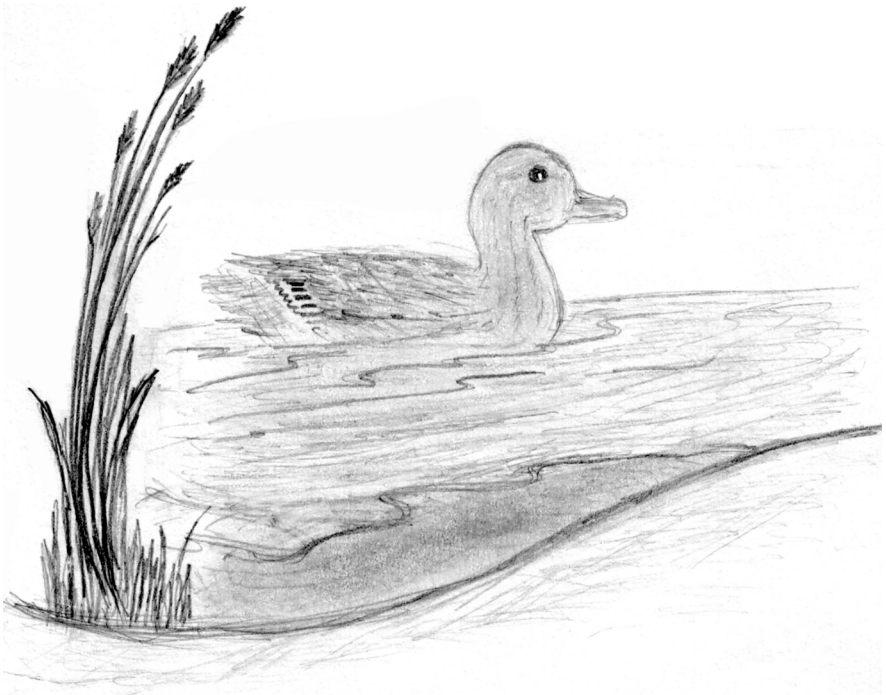
The gentle, persistent touch of rain and cold, and the slow action of mosses and lichens, gradually turn rock into soil. As your feet rub against the rock, you too become part of the story of stone becoming soil.

A few thousand years ago, it was all rock here. It's been changing ever since. What will it be like tomorrow?

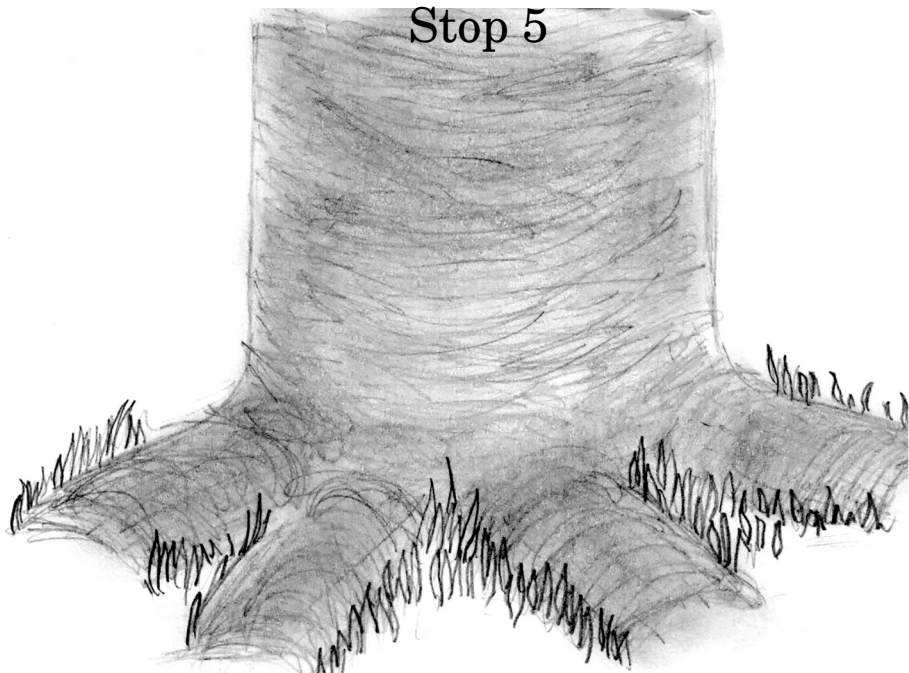
Stop 4

Long years ago, water began to flow across the face of this rugged new land. Water carved a deep river valley. For years free-flowing, and sometimes free-flooding, the Holston River was dammed in 1954 by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Fort Patrick Henry Lake controls flooding, produces electricity from the power of flowing water, and keeps the lake brimful of water. There is so much going on just beneath the surface, but the lake seems so still...



Stop 5



Just imagine how old these gray-barked BEECH trees must be! They are long lives of shade, clean air and water. They are years of food for wildlife, and yards of roots to control soil erosion. And they hold the special feelings of ancient forests.

No wonder the Cherokee had their most sacred land near here. No wonder their main foot paths, including the Great Warriors' Path, threaded this river valley.

Today we travel on foot like the Cherokee, but we walk for enjoyment. They traveled in woods like these for survival. They gathered, hunted, or grew all they needed in lands just like this. Could we?

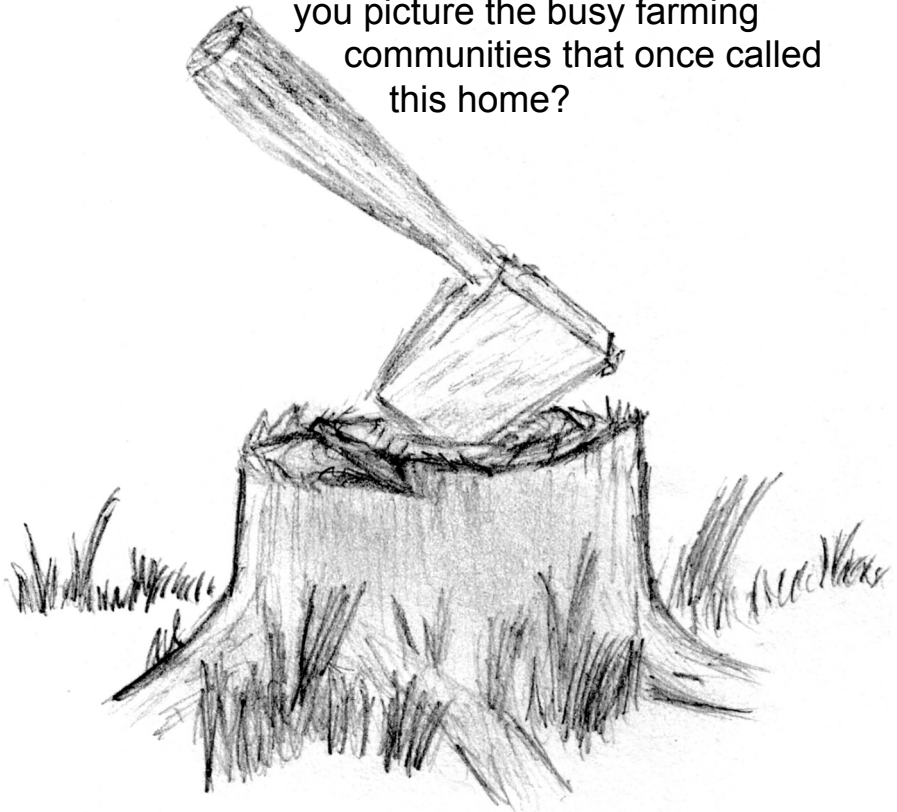
Well, in a way, we do. Even though we don't live so close to the land, everything we need still does come from the land and its life. Can you think of anything we use or enjoy that did **not** begin as something from nature?

Stop 6

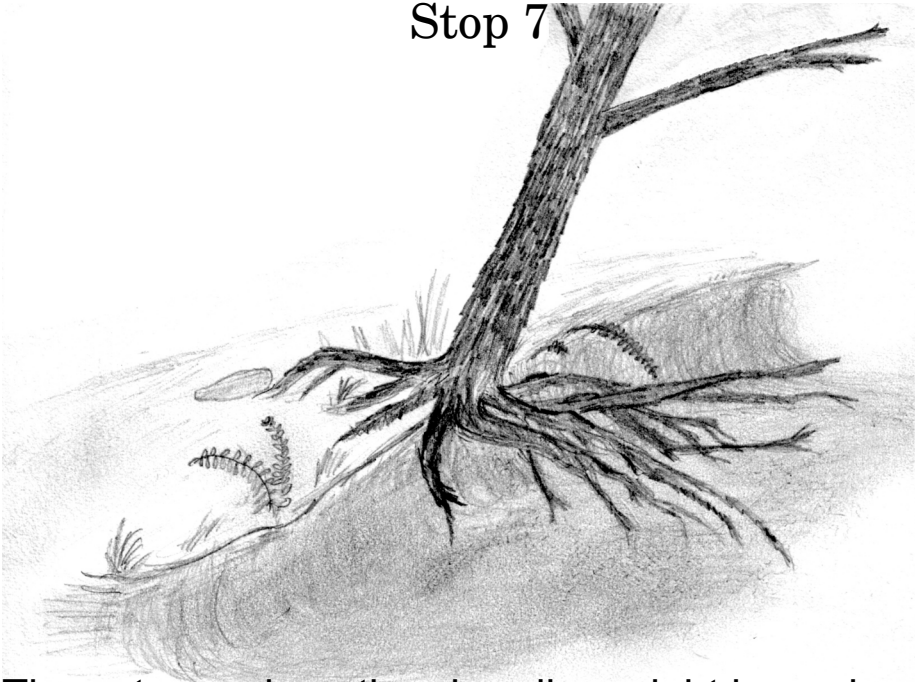
When the early European settlers first came to this land, they too appreciated the resources and the scenic beauty of the Holston River valley. They chose this valley as their home. After many battles along the Warriors' Path, the Cherokee were forced to leave.

Now the river and rich river bottomland supplied the needs of many small communities. Up and down the river, men and women farmed the fertile soil. Their lives and their dreams are reflected in the lake that now covers much of what once was their land.

Look out across this flooded river valley. Can you picture the busy farming communities that once called this home?



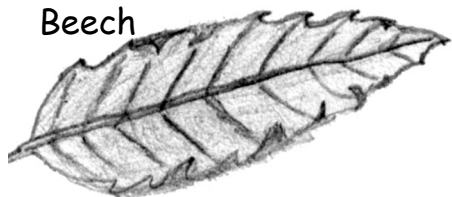
Stop 7



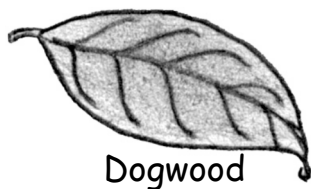
These trees along the shoreline might be a sign. Where would we be without the land base and resources of wild places? Waves from passing boats have undermined the soil under these trees. So too, we could be undermining the very world we depend on.

Those earlier travelers here - the Cherokee and European settlers - were fewer in number and had limited power to change the land. Today, we are great in number and strong in industrial power. Who knows how far the ripples of our actions may spread...

Beech



Stop 8



Dogwood

Sometimes people harm nature, but we can also help! One of the best ways to help the natural world, and our human world, is simply to live and let live. If we leave a healthy landscape undisturbed, and just enjoy it, it can usually take care of itself!

The Strickler family cleared and farmed and lived on most of what is now our campground. But they left some of their land wild and uncut. That's why we have these fine old woods here today - because they cared enough to protect some of their forests for the future.

Here are pictures of the leaves of some common trees in this forest. Their names can be a key to a new understanding of today's lakeshore woods.



Sassafras



Tulip
Poplar



Shagbark
Hickory



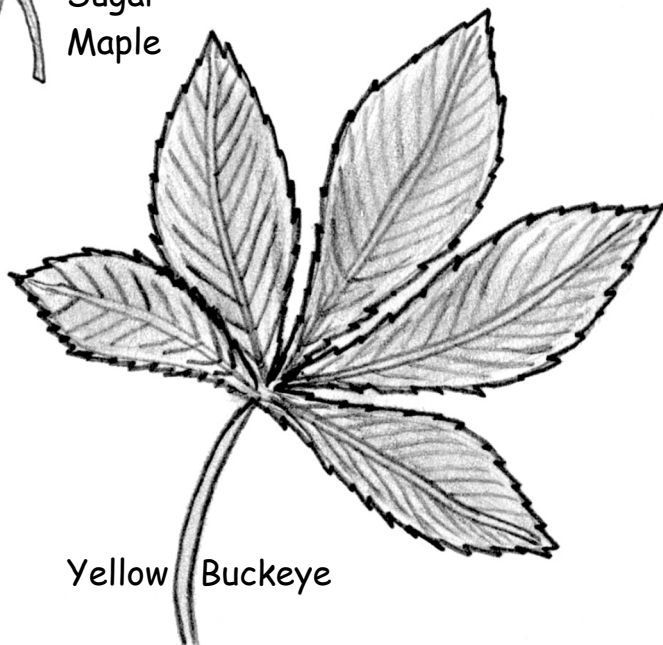
Red Oak



Sugar
Maple



White Oak



Yellow Buckeye

Stop 9



Where are all the animals? This lakeshore woodland is “home sweet habitat” for many wild creatures. But we rarely get to see them. Perhaps we just don’t notice them. Perhaps they notice us first, and they are hiding from us!

Yes, it’s hard to sneak up on shy wildlife. But even if we don’t see the animals, we can be “critter detectives” -- we can search for the hints and clues that animals leave.

For example, it’s rare to get a glimpse of the beavers that visit this shoreline. They come late in the night, especially in the autumn, to cut saplings for a snack. Even if you never see the beaver at work, have you already noticed several gnawed-off trees?

You may not see the mink that hide under these banks by day, and come out at dusk to go fishing. But you might spot their tracks in the soft shoreline mud.

Even the squirrels and chipmunks might run away and hide if you are hiking with some noisy friends! But you will surely spot where they have had a “picnic,” and left some gnawed acorn or hickory nut shells near the trail.

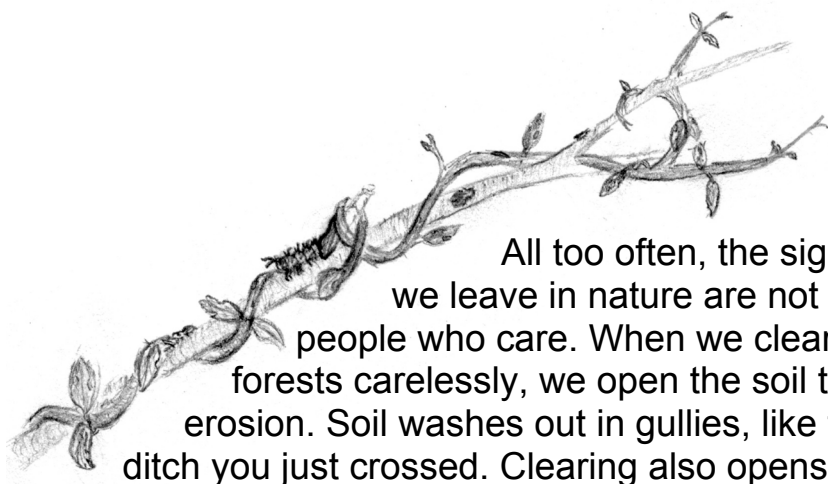


Everything that lives in these woods, or that visits these woods, leaves signs. With time and patience, we can learn to read these signs. We can also learn to be careful about the signs that **we** leave on the land.

Yes, every living thing leaves signs, but we humans can **choose** what signs we leave. We can leave signs of our caring, or we can leave signs of our carelessness.



Stop 10



All too often, the signs we leave in nature are not of people who care. When we clear forests carelessly, we open the soil to erosion. Soil washes out in gullies, like the ditch you just crossed. Clearing also opens up the land to plants that can be harmful to forests.

For example, watch for honeysuckle vines along the trail, and see where they grow. Japanese Honeysuckle was brought to our country for gardens and landscaping. Can you see how, in the wrong places, honeysuckle can choke out many other forest plants?

There are many other non-native plants in this part of the forest. They gain a foothold where the land is disturbed, and they are hard to evict! Let's hope the native plants and trees can finally win out over these "pest" plants.

Stop 11

During the 1930's, this was a cow pasture. Today, it's growing into a young forest. What about the future? The answer depends on how well each of us cares for our world.

For example, notice all the tall, dark green cedar trees here. Eastern Red Cedar can only sprout and thrive in bright sunlight. Cedars pave the way for forests of the future, because most forest trees sprout better in shade. So cedars are the “nurse” trees for shade-loving trees like oaks and maples.

But cedar seedlings need sun, not shade. They can't sprout in the dense shade cast by their parents. In a way, cedar trees change their corner of the world so that their own young can no longer live there. Let's hope we can do better for our children!



Stop 12



Looking across the lake is almost like looking into the future of the land. That ancient forest on the far shore is a mirror of what this young woodland may someday be.

But how do forests grow and mature? Where do new trees and plants come from?

Seeds with “fuzz” or “wings” travel by wind. Other seeds hitch a ride. Birds give wings to berry seeds when they eat them. Squirrels give legs to nuts they carry. And we give a free ride to prickly burs.

These are the seeds of tomorrow’s forest. With a little imagination, you can look at the young sprouts along the trail, and see that old forest in the making.

Stop 13

You will soon leave these woods. But first, have a seat on the large gray limestone rock at the shore. Think about all the changes this land has seen. Think about the discoveries that today's forests hold.

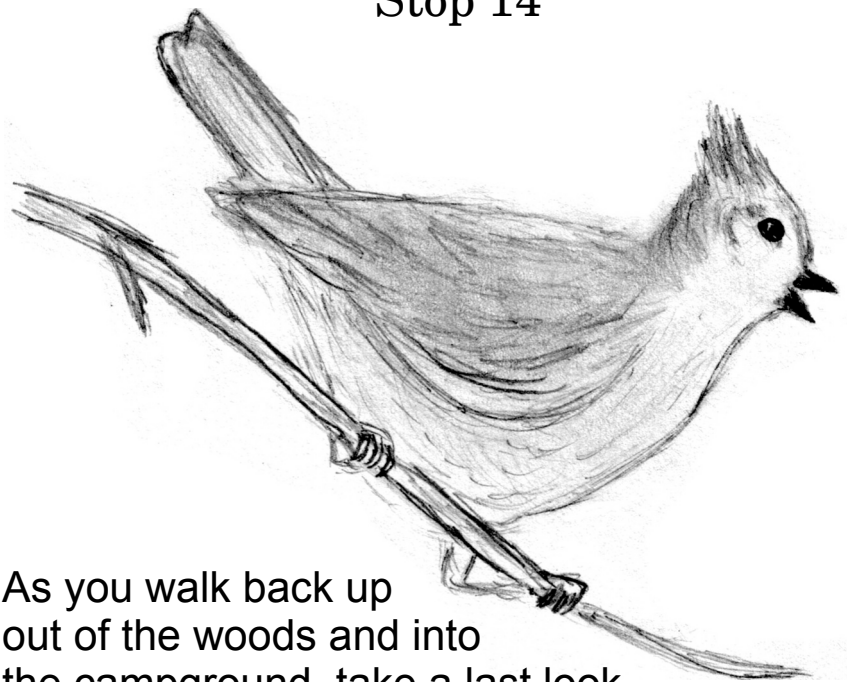
People change land. Have you been changed by the land in your walk today?

Enjoy the wide view across the lake from here. All the land as far as you can see is part of Warriors' Path State Park. This land has been set aside as a refuge for wild nature. This land is being protected for us and for our children and grandchildren to walk in and enjoy. It's a healthy landscape today because of all the people before us who have cared for it. And we can be a part of that protection. What we choose to do today can make a big difference for nature and for people, for today and long into the future.

This shoreline is usually a peaceful, quiet place. But sometimes it's good to make a little noise. This special spot holds a secret - it's the best echo in the park! Stand on the rock, face the bluffs across the water, and shout out your happiness for the Lake Shore forest! Let the hills ring and echo those good feelings.

(From this point, you have a choice of trails. You can continue on the Lake Shore trail by turning RIGHT at the fork, and return to the campground. Or you can take the LEFT fork, and start on the Connector trail. This will go through more young woodland, follow the remains of an old farm road, and then join the Lake Hollow Trail. At intersection with Lake Hollow, you can turn right to return to the campground near the community campfire circle, or turn left to follow the Lake Hollow Trail. This will take you along the sunnier side of the lakeside woodlands, and end up close to the entrance to the campground. Any of these choices will bring you through some great places for nature discovery.)

Stop 14



As you walk back up out of the woods and into the campground, take a last look back. Have you soaked up some good memories of this natural place? We people need cities, and roads and campgrounds, but aren't you glad we also have wild places like this?

In today's fast-paced world, as much as we travel, you may not be back here to hike this trail again. But, if we all care, we can save this place, and others like it, for all the life that is at home here, and for the generations of people to come.

To Return to the start of the trail:

When the trail brings you back to the road, turn to the right. Follow this road past the main bath house. Turn right just past the main bath house, and follow this road downhill, back to the lake and the start of the trail.



Thank you for visiting the Lake Shore Trail. There are many other hiking trails here at Warriors' Path State Park. Stop by the park office, and you can get your own copy of the park's trail map. This map can be your guide as you visit some of the other beautiful natural places across the 1,000 acres of *your* Tennessee State Park!



Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Authorization #327015. Funding provided by **Friends of Warriors' Path State Park**. If you would like to help support the park, you can join the **Friends!** Just contact the park office at 423-239-8531 for more information.